

Cancer Unit Replies

TO THE EDITORS:

On May 5 your newspaper published a full-page advertisement from the Tobacco Institute questioning the scientific validity of a study by Drs. Auerbach and Hammond on cigarette smoking in dogs, which was presented by the American Cancer Society.

In the interest of the public's right to balanced news, this letter states

the correct facts behind the presentation of this research study.

There has been a mass of evidence, statistical, epidemiological and biological, that the smoking of cigarettes is the major cause of lung cancer in man. The culminating evidence developed in the recent Auerbach-Hammond study demonstrates that dogs can get lung cancer from smoking cigarettes.

The Tobacco Institute states that "present accounts of this study are based solely upon the information and interpretations provided by the press." The facts are that the findings of the study were made public at a scientific meeting of the American Cancer Society held in conjunction with a meeting of its board of directors. This was an open meeting to which physicians, other scientists and representatives of research and educational institutions were invited. The society had held many such scientific meetings in the past and will do so in the future. One of the reasons for a prompt presentation to the society and through it to the public was the remarkable significant data obtained in support of the theory that the less tar and nicotine in the mainstream of smoke, the less the risk of emphysema and lung cancer. In other words, where effective filters were used in the study, no cancers were produced in the dogs.

For years some segments of the cigarette industry have attacked warnings of the dangers of cigarette smoking and protested that no one has been able to produce lung cancer in animals with cigarette smoke. This has now been done.

Important as are the findings of lung cancer in dogs, even more important to the American Cancer Society is the proof of the risks of cigarette smoking in man, demonstrated by the analysis of mortality rates and the changes in lung cancer of human beings.

The Tobacco Institute attacks the American Cancer Society for "its use of publicity techniques." This comes from an industry that for years has relied on publicity and advertising to obscure the basic fact that cigarette smoking is the main cause of lung cancer in man. We are naturally gratified that the industry which has so long resisted scientific evidence apparently has now been converted to the principles of scientific validation, at least in this instance.

The Tobacco Institute requested that it be allowed to appoint a committee of men of outstanding competence and integrity to review the findings in the Auerbach-Hammond study. We believe that this request from the tobacco industry is without precedent in the scientific community, and we refused the request. We have already stated that there has never been any restriction against individual scientists' visiting the Veterans Administration Hospital in East Orange, New Jersey, where the work was done, and reviewing the research with Drs. Auerbach and Hammond. A number of distinguished scientists have already reviewed the findings.

Because of the great public interest in the link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, and because of the advertising campaign initiated by the Tobacco Institute to cast doubt on the validity of the dog study, the ACS is requesting the surgeon general of the United States Public Health Service, a totally impartial scientific body, to conduct an analysis of the Auerbach-Hammond study data.

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